

# LANDMARKS

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Government of the District of Columbia



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## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DESIGNATED AS A PRESERVE AMERICA COMMUNITY

Last fall, the District of Columbia was designated as a "Preserve America Community" by First Lady Michelle Obama, Honorary Chair of the Preserve America program. The nomination was submitted by Mayor Fenty, with a supporting resolution from the Council of the District of Columbia.

Established in 2003, Preserve America is a federal initiative administered in cooperation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The goals of Preserve America include a greater shared knowledge about the nation's past, strengthened regional identities and local pride, increased local participation in preserving the country's cultural and natural heritage assets, and support for the economic vitality of our communities.

Mayor Fenty's application highlighted the city's African American Heritage Trail and other cultural trails, the work of the Historic Preservation Office and the Historic Preservation Review Board, and efforts by numerous city agencies, preservation organizations, and volunteer citizen groups to preserve and celebrate our shared heritage. In conferring the designation, Mrs. Obama stated, "You are showing that each of us has a role to play in shaping a better future, and we can do it by honoring our past."

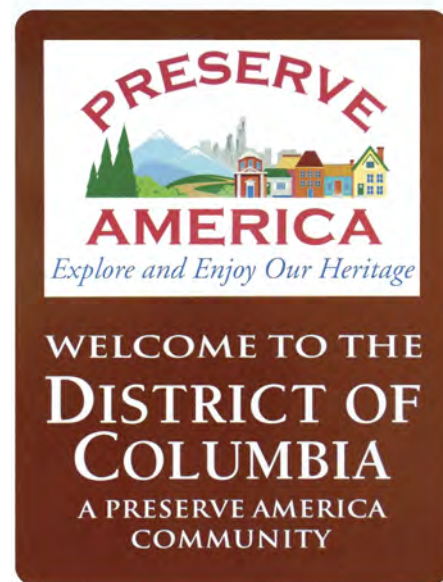


Photo Credit: HPO

Cities designated by the Preserve America program receive recognition by the White House and are eligible to apply for matching federal funds to support heritage tourism, education, and historic preservation planning activities. Funded projects can include documenting historic resources, interpreting historic sites, planning, marketing, and training activities.

More information about the program can be found online at [www.preserveamerica.gov](http://www.preserveamerica.gov). ❖

## WE MOVED!

On April 19, the Office of Planning/Historic Preservation Office opened its doors at our new home in Southwest. Our new address is 1100 4th Street SW, Suite E650 Washington, DC 20024. Our phone number (202-442-8800) and fax number (202-442-7638)

will remain the same. The Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) has already moved to this location, and the DCRA Permit Center and Homeowners Center are open for business. ❖

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## CELEBRATING NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH

May marks the annual celebration of National Historic Preservation Month! This year's theme – *Old is the New Green* – recognizes the role that preservation plays in environmentally sustainable building practices. Living in and using historic buildings is inherently “green” and supports a sustainable lifestyle. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has created a website for this special month containing information on weatherizing historic homes, greening commercial buildings, and planning and promoting events to commemorate National Historic Preservation Month. Please visit [www.preservationnation.org/take-action/preservation-month](http://www.preservationnation.org/take-action/preservation-month) for more information. ❖

## SUSTAINABILITY IN THE DISTRICT

Residents and business owners in the District of Columbia are learning about and implementing various improvements to “green” their properties. The City has taken several legislative actions to encourage environmentally friendly approaches to construction and energy use. The Clean and Affordable Energy Act sets a goal for the District of obtaining 20% of its energy from renewable sources by 2020. The Green Building Act promotes energy and water conservation for new construction and the Climate Action Plan aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

On March 9, members of the Historic Preservation Office participated in a panel discussion on sustainability and historic preservation, sponsored by the Cleveland Park Historical Society and Cleveland Park Citizens' Association. HPO Historic Preservation Specialist and sustainability contact Brendan Meyer answered questions along with fellow panelists Mary Cheh, Ward 3 Council Member; Tersh Boasberg, Chair of the Historic Preservation Review Board; Sandy Roskas of Astrum Solar; and Tom Jester, historic architect with Quinn Evans. Topics included weatherization, energy efficiency, tax incentives, and solar and geothermal energy choices in historic districts.

HPO stressed the importance of basic home maintenance and weatherization for getting the most “bang for the buck” in terms of efficiency. Insulating attics, caulking around windows, and changing to compact fluorescent light bulbs are among the easiest and least expensive ways to increase efficiency. In addition, upgrading old heating and cooling systems, replacing appliances with EnergyStar

rated appliances, and installing a programmable thermostat all help to lower bills and support sustainability.

HPO cautioned against window replacement as a worthwhile method to combat energy loss. At the panel discussion, the example was used that restoring a loose, leaky, 100-year-old wood window saves energy costs and pays for itself in about five years. Replacing the same window with a double-glazed insert window would save energy costs and pay for itself in about 30 years, at which point it will likely be at or beyond its lifespan and need replacement again.

The federal tax credit for energy efficiency improvements covers storm windows, which can be installed in the District without a permit; HVAC upgrades; roofing; insulation; solar, wind, and geothermal installations, and other improvements. The District's Renewable Energy Incentive Program currently offers rebates for solar photovoltaic and wind power, with additional rebates coming for geothermal, solar hot water heaters, and biomass products.

HPO regularly approves permits for installing such systems in historic districts. Permits for installing green roofs and solar panels that are not visible from a public street have been issued in Capitol Hill, U Street, Cleveland Park, Takoma Park, and other historic districts. Geothermal drilling permits are generally approved quickly without substantive review because there are no visible effects to historic districts. ❖

## NEW HPO STAFF

In March, Architectural Historian Kimberly Prothro Williams joined the staff of the Historic Preservation Office. Although Kim has worked at HPO on a part-time contractual basis since 2003, she now brings her knowledge and skills to the office in a full-time capacity.



Photo Credit: HPO

Kimberly Prothro  
Williams, National  
Register Coordinator

Kim is an architectural historian with 20 years of experience in the field of historic preservation. Since earning her Master of Architectural History with a Certificate in Preservation from the University of Virginia in 1988, she has been conducting research, managing cultural resources surveys, preparing and overseeing preservation and heritage tourism documentation in D.C. and the metropolitan region. As National Register Coordinator, her primary focus at HPO will continue to be researching, writing and evalu-

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## New HPO Staff from page 2

ating nominations for listing in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites and the National Register of Historic Places. Her critical research and writing skills will help us continue to expand our brochure series and improve our historic buildings database. We are happy to finally have Kim join the staff permanently! ❖

## PRESERVING A LEGACY: BILLY SIMPSON'S

Billy Simpson's House of Seafood and Steaks was an upscale restaurant and lounge for DC's African American movers and shakers of the mid-twentieth century. The restaurant served as the location of important Civil



Photo: dekalidoscope.wordpress.com

Rights planning and political conversations about Home Rule, desegregation, and other affairs of the 1950-70s and was designated a DC Landmark in 2008.

Today, the site is a flurry of construction activity as the former restaurant and its neighbors in the 3800 block of Georgia Avenue NW prepare to reopen. The government-sponsored project responded to community interest in preserving the legacy of Billy Simpson's and returning the building to restaurant use. The new owners, who run several other eating and drinking establishments in the District, may honor the new venue by keeping its historic name. Petworth residents eagerly await its opening. ❖

## TRAGEDY STRIKES HISTORIC CHURCH

The snowstorms of this past winter took their toll on the District. In addition to the numerous potholes, the downed power lines, and damaged landscapes, the Deanwood community lost one of its signature buildings. On February 6, Joshua's Temple First Born Church on Sheriff Road, NE largely collapsed under the weight of snow on its roof. Although no one was injured during the incident, the sanctuary was completely crushed, with only the front bell tower remaining.

The structure, a fixture in the Deanwood community, was built in 1908 as Zion Baptist Church. The building is the oldest continuous-

ly operating church building in Deanwood. It is the work of noted African American architect W. Sidney Pittman, who designed several buildings in Deanwood and throughout the District, including Garfield Elementary School and the 12th Street Colored YMCA (now the Thurgood Marshall Center for Science and Heritage). Pittman is the subject of a Greater Deanwood Heritage Trail marker, located directly across the street from the church.

Since the collapse the church leadership has worked with preservation organizations, led by the DC Preservation League and including HPO and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, to consider options to rebuild the building, while preserving salvageable original features. ❖



Photo Credit: HPO



Photo Credit: HPO



Photo Credit: HPO



Photo Credit: HPO



## NEW HISTORIC DESIGNATIONS

In January, the HPRB approved six landmark designations in the Foggy Bottom neighborhood; they were submitted by the George Washington University as part of its overall campus planning initiatives. The buildings include five large apartment buildings, now mostly university residence halls, that are particularly good examples of the city's high-rise apartments erected in the 1920s and 1930s, and the Office and Studio of concrete craftsman John J. Earley.

The 8-story **Flagler** at 736 22nd Street was erected in 1926 in a classical revival style and was quite a departure from the typical rowhouse architecture of the neighborhood. At the time of its construction, it was touted for the conven-



Photo Credit: EHT Traceries

iences and services that it offered to middle-class residents. **The Keystone** at 2150 Pennsylvania Avenue was named for its wedge-shaped lot and footprint. Completed in 1931, it is a fine exam-



Photo Credit: EHT Traceries

ple of the Art Deco style with its limestone details, metal panels, and the vertical emphasis of its decorative elements.

**Munson Hall and Milton Hall**, in the 2200 block of I Street, were built in 1937-38, when Washington was expanding with an influx of Depression-era federal employees. The developers promoted the affordability of the units as

well as their amenities, which included all-electric kitchens and air-cooling measures. **The Everglades** at 2223 H Street was designed by prolific DC architect Joseph Abel. While the



Photo Credit: EHT Traceries

building's name may have been meant to evoke cool, tropical breezes, like Milton and Munson Halls, its amenities—and its advertising—emphasized battling the Everglades-like heat and humidity of Washington summers with central air and outdoor spaces!

The **John J. Earley Office and Studio**, currently used as a dance studio by GWU, is a complex of two buildings connected by a one-story wing. The property was used by Earley to research and perfect his method of creating decorative exposed aggregate concrete panels. Earley's work can be found throughout the District, including the Reptile House at the National Zoo, the entry panels at the Scottish Rite Temple, the promenade at the Franciscan Monastery, and the interior of the Shrine of the Sacred Heart.

At its February meeting, HPRB designated **Woodrow Wilson High School** at 3950 Chesapeake Street, NW, designed collaboratively by the Office of the Municipal Architect, a team of private consulting architects, and the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts. Wilson is by far the



Photo Credit: EHT Traceries

largest public school in the District, and the largest District government building in Ward 3. Built in the midst of the Great Depression of the 1930s, Wilson reflects the ongoing commitment to high-quality public facilities in the nation's capital even during times of hardship, as well as the city's dramatic growth, as Roosevelt's New Deal expanded the federal workforce by 60% and increased the population of the city by more than one third. ❖

## DOLLARS FOR YOUR COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PROJECT

Is your block association curious about a funky little building down the street or is your neighborhood organization in need of a few more dollars to pull off a community history day? Well, the DC Community Heritage Project (DCCHP), a joint project of HPO and the Humanities Council of Washington, DC, may have the solution to your dilemma!

May 3rd is the deadline for submitting an application for funding from this successful program that has provided \$76,000 to 43 organizations across the city seeking to preserve their neighborhood history. Now entering its fourth year of funding grassroots heritage preservation projects, DCCHP offers up to \$2,000 for each grant with the goal of awarding at least two per ward. Projects funded in the past have included landmark nomination preparation, brochures, oral history projects, videos, and other documentaries and publications.

Each applicant must be a non-profit organization and must be able to provide at least a one-for-one match though the match may be in-kind. Awards will be made by June 10. Project must be completed by October 15 with final reports submitted by November 15. Please see the website [www.wdchumanities.org](http://www.wdchumanities.org) for more information and the application. For questions, please contact Patsy Fletcher at 202-741-0816 or [patsy.fletcher@dc.gov](mailto:patsy.fletcher@dc.gov) or Joel Makonnen at 202-387-8391 or [jmakonnen@wdchumanities.org](mailto:jmakonnen@wdchumanities.org). ❖

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR 2010 PRESERVATION AWARDS

Nominations for the Eighth Annual Awards for Excellence in Historic Preservation will be accepted between April 19 and April 30, 2010 in the following categories: Archaeology, Advocacy and Community Involvement, Design and Construction, Education, Stewardship, and Lifetime Achievement. Please see our website for the application form, qualifications, and guidelines, and consider nominating your project! [www.planning.dc.gov/planning/cwp/view,a,1284,q,635477.asp](http://www.planning.dc.gov/planning/cwp/view,a,1284,q,635477.asp) or call Bruce Yarnall at 202-442-8835. ❖

